

What is claimed is:

1. A method for controlling the speed of a vehicle, the method comprising the steps of:

causing the actual speed of said vehicle to track a desired speed; and,

5 driving a transmission of said vehicle to downshift to reduce said actual speed.

2. The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of additionally driving a brake system of said vehicle to reduce said actual speed.

3. The method of claim 2, comprising the further step of driving said brake system when an output quantity of a drive unit of said vehicle lies below a first value adjusted for an overrun operation in the instantaneous gear stage of said transmission.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said output quantity is a drive torque.

5. The method of claim 3, comprising the further step of driving said transmission to downshift when said output quantity of said drive unit drops below a second value which can be expected to adjust for the overrun operation in the next lower gear stage.

6. The method of claim 2, comprising the further step of driving said transmission to downshift after a pregiven time after the start of driving said brake system to reduce said actual speed.

7. The method of claim 2, comprising the further step of driving said transmission for downshifting in dependence upon an accelerator pedal value.

8. The method of claim 7, comprising the further step of iteratively increasing said accelerator pedal value for a requested downshifting of said transmission.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein said accelerator pedal value is changed in dependence upon a difference between an initial deceleration request when activating said brake system and an instantaneous deceleration request of said brake system.